



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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**Tara B. White, Chair
Michele Shalaby
Nathaniel H. Yohalem
Board of Selectmen**

**Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting
August 29, 2014**

Board Members Present: Tara B. White, Chairman
Michele Shalaby
Nat Yohalem

Others Present: Michael Skorput, Administrative Assistant
Caren Adams, Tax Collector

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 4:10 p.m.

Chairman White explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss days/hours of work as it relates to Caren's letter dated August 11, 2014.

Caren then explained she changed to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to approximately 1:55 p.m. Previously she stated she left for her bus run at 2:25 p.m.; her daughter has changed schools and she has had her bus run changed. She stated that the Town received the benefit of her daughter being in the New Marlborough School System, because she actually worked more than the stated 20-24 hours she had been hired for.

Selectman Yohalem stated he saw three problems: (1) no one was in the Tax office on Wednesday, (2) when the salary budget was passed, it was for hours from 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. for ten months, and (3) other employees may also wish to change their hours if they have completed their workload. The Board does not want to set a precedent regarding employee hours. Caren's contention is that her predecessor, Bill Garrett, was off on Fridays. Selectman Yohalem reminded Caren that in a previous discussion, she stated she enjoyed Wednesdays off in order to take care of her personal business, but that, if need be, she could work Wednesday; in retrospect, she's having a problem with working Wednesday.

Michael Skorput stated that the "rule of thumb" working hours for that position are 20-24 hours a week for a small town. Caren stated that even though she works 20-24 hours a week, if there is an issue that has to be dealt with, she comes in to handle the problem, and that she does check her email and phone messages.

Selectman Yohalem stated that the Town has given her a raise in salary. Caren stated that her workload also doubled, but that she can still accomplish her work within the 20-24 hour period. Caren stated she had already spoken with an attorney regarding this situation, and that it would be against the law to reduce her salary. The Town, however, could find no records on the number of hours Caren was hired for, even though the posted hours on the tax invoices state 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. daily.

Michael Skorput advised that when Bill Garrett was hired, the office of Tax Collector and Treasurer was held by Alicia Brazie, who worked Monday through Friday; but when that responsibility was split, Bill Garrett worked 20-24 hours and 10-12 hours were given to the Treasurer. Selectman Yohalem stated the complaints he heard were two-fold: the Tax Collector is cutting her hours by 1/3 and is her salary therefore cut by 1/3? Selectman Yohalem stated the Board would like Caren to work Wednesdays.

Selectman Shalaby spoke about the perception of Caren working less and not having her salary cut, but that the Board should find a way to balance the two, and that perhaps the hours should be changed from 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. The sticking point is the lack of Wednesday hours.

The Board continued its discussion after Caren left to attend a function at her daughter's school. The Board wanted Caren to change her hours from 8:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m to 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Board agreed that her hours should be 27.5 hours. A letter will be sent to Caren advising her that she must complete 27.5 hours each week, the hours to be agreed upon between her and the Board.

Being that there was no further business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made, seconded and so voted by all members to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Fleck
Administrative Secretary